



Environmental Quality Board

658 CEDAR STREET
ST. PAUL, MN 55155
PHONE: 651-297-1257
FAX: 651-296-3698
TTY: 800-627-3529
WWW.EQB.STATE.MN.US

By e-mail and U.S. Mail

August 16, 2004

Pamela Jo Rasmussen
Permitting Analyst
Xcel Energy, Inc. - NSP
PO Box 8
1414 W. Hamilton Avenue
Eau Claire, WI, 54702-0008

Re: Docket MEQB No. 03-73-TR-Xcel

Dear Ms. Ramussen:

Here are information requests numbers six (6) and seven (7) regarding the Split Rock to Lakefield 345/115 transmission line project.

You may respond by e-mail, but please also provide a response in writing by September 10, 2004 so the information can be included in the draft environmental impact statement for the project. Please indicate the above cited docket number, the corresponding request number and the respondent's name and title in your response. If your response contains Trade Secret data, please include a public copy. If you have any questions or problems providing the requested information, please contact me at 651-296-2096.

Request No. 6.

Please provide more detailed information regarding the potential for waterfowl, raptors, or other birds to be injured or killed by colliding with transmission lines. Please include information regarding what types of birds are most affected, what might be a safe distance between bird flyways and transmission lines, the relative effectiveness of measures that can be taken to reduce risks (such as adding diverters or modifying structure design) and any other aspect of the issue that you think is relevant. The EQB will, of course, independently assess the issue with the help of staff from the Department of Natural Resources. But since Xcel Energy has no doubt developed expertise in this area, we want to make sure we take advantage of your information, too. If the response is likely to be too voluminous, please call me to discuss what information you have that might be most up to date and useful in comparing the routes and mitigation options for this specific project.

Request No. 7

Please provide additional details regarding the estimated costs of constructing Route 1 (Interstate Route) versus the Route 2 (Alliant Route). Table 3 on Page 17 of the Xcel Energy permit application indicates that the Interstate Route is approximately \$8.5 million less than the Alliant Route. Please provide further information and cost breakdowns regarding the two routes, including whether reduced maintenance and replacement costs for the existing older 161-kV structures over the next decade or so were factored into the cost analysis. If the potential for reduced future maintenance and replacement costs for the 161-kV line were not factored into Xcel Energy's analysis, please provide such an analysis or explain why you believe such an analysis is not possible.

Respectfully submitted

Andrea Dick (for) John N. Wachtler

John N. Wachtler
Minnesota Environmental Quality Board
658 Cedar Street, St. Paul, MN 55155
651-296-2096
john.wachtler@state.mn.us